

Enhanced Smog Check

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHY IS THE SMOG CHECK PROGRAM CHANGING IN THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA?

The original Smog Check program created in the 1980s began the work of reducing California's air pollution. As technology has advanced, the program's effectiveness has grown. As part of California's ongoing commitment to cleaner air, the Bay Area became the last large urban region in the state to update its existing Smog Check program. The new program uses newer equipment to test for more pollutants and newer test procedures to help identify vehicles that need repair.

WHAT ARE THE ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS OF SMOG CHECK?

The Smog Check program has greatly reduced air pollution created by California's 30 million cars. According to the California Air Resources Board, the program removes more than 360 tons of smog-forming pollutants from the air every day. The new program will reduce smog-forming emissions by an estimated 77 tons per day in the Bay Area—an improvement of 30 tons a day.

WHAT PARTS OF THE BAY AREA ARE AFFECTED?

The new Smog Check program changes are in place in all nine counties of the San Francisco Bay Area. The counties of Alameda, Contra Costa, and San Francisco, as well as portions of Marin, Napa, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano and Sonoma, are now part of California's "Enhanced" Smog Check program. For a complete list of affected Zip Codes, visit www.smogcheck.ca.gov.



WHAT CHANGES UNDER THE NEW PROGRAM?

The new program uses newer equipment to test for more pollutants and newer test procedures to help identify vehicles that need repair. Also, some vehicles will need to go to a Test-Only station for their Smog Check.

WHAT IS A TEST-ONLY STATION?

Test-Only stations are licensed to only perform Smog Checks. State law prohibits them from making repairs.

WHICH VEHICLES NEED TO GO TO A TEST-ONLY STATION FOR THEIR SMOG CHECK?

Vehicles with expected high emissions levels are selected for testing at these stations.

HOW WILL I KNOW IF I NEED TO TAKE MY CAR TO A TEST-ONLY STATION?

You will be notified on the registration renewal notice sent by the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) if your vehicle requires a Smog Check at a Test-Only station.

HOW CAN I FIND A TEST-ONLY STATION?

You can find the nearest Test-Only station by visiting www.smogcheck.ca.gov or by calling 1-800-952-5210. If your vehicle requires a Smog Check at a Test-Only station and needs repair, you will automatically qualify for the Consumer Assistance Program. (For information, see sections on the Consumer Assistance Program below.)

HOW MUCH WILL THE NEW SMOG CHECK COST?

Smog Check prices vary in different areas. Prices for Smog Checks aren't regulated, so motorists are encouraged to shop around. For a list of stations in your area, visit www.smogcheck.ca.gov.

HOW LONG WILL A SMOG CHECK TAKE?

The average test time is 20-30 minutes, with many stations able to complete it in 15 minutes.

WILL MY VEHICLE BE TESTED MORE OFTEN UNDER THE NEW SMOG CHECK PROGRAM?

No. Your vehicle must be tested every other year, just as before. A Smog Check is also required when you sell your car.

WHICH VEHICLES REQUIRE A SMOG CHECK?

A Smog Check is required on vehicles older than five years and under 30 years old (with the exception of diesels, motorcycles, electric vehicles, and two-cylinder engine vehicles).

HOW CAN I HELP MY VEHICLE PASS SMOG CHECK?

Proper and regular maintenance according to your Owner's Manual, and not tampering with the emissions control equipment are keys to passing Smog Check and lowering emissions from your vehicle.

WHAT DO I DO IF MY VEHICLE FAILS SMOG CHECK?

You will need to get your vehicle repaired so it can pass its Smog Check retest in order to complete your registration. But, first see if you are eligible for our Consumer Assistance Program (For information, see sections on the Consumer Assistance Program below.) If you are not eligible, you may want to visit a Smog Check station participating in our Gold Shield program. (For information, see section on Gold Shield below.)

WHAT IS A GOLD SHIELD STATION?

A Gold Shield station is a licensed Smog Check station that meets certain BAR performance criteria in order to certify all vehicles it repairs. This includes a vehicle that fails its Smog Check at a Test-Only station, or one that fails at "Gross Polluter" levels. (For information, see section on Gross Polluter below.) This can prevent you from having to go to a separate Test-Only station to pass the Smog Check retest. To find a Gold Shield

station near you, visit www.smogcheck.ca.gov or call 1-800-952-5210.

WHAT IS A GROSS POLLUTER?

Some vehicles that fail their smog inspections give off such high levels of pollution that a category called "Gross Polluter" was created. BAR identifies these vehicles to encourage their immediate repair. Gross Polluters are some of the worst polluting vehicles on California roadways.

WHAT IF I CAN'T AFFORD THE REPAIRS?

The Consumer Assistance Program (CAP) helps many Californians whose vehicles need Smog Check repairs. CAP allows qualified motorists to receive up to \$500 in financial assistance for Smog Check repairs. You may qualify for repair assistance in one of two ways:

1. Your vehicle requires a Smog Check at a Test-Only station, or
2. Your income falls within certain levels.

HOW CAN I APPLY FOR CAP?

To get an application, visit online at www.smogcheck.ca.gov or call 1-800-952-5210. If you intend to apply for the program, do not have any repairs done on your vehicle. You must first submit an application and have it approved. You will then receive a list of participating stations where you can take your vehicle to have it repaired.

WHO ADMINISTERS THE SMOG CHECK PROGRAM IN CALIFORNIA?

The Smog Check program is administered by the Department of Consumer Affairs, Bureau of Automotive Repair (DCA/BAR). BAR licenses and regulates more than 8,600 Smog Check stations, nearly 14,000 Smog Check technicians, and 34,000 automotive repair dealers across the state.

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE SMOG CHECK PROGRAM AND THE BUREAU OF AUTOMOTIVE REPAIR?

For more information visit www.smogcheck.ca.gov.